

## ...A Composition Workshop...

This composition workshop is a great way to inspire students (individuals and groups) to compose using different stimuli.

### Part One:

Brainstorm how the three stimuli provided on pages 2,3,4 can be related to musical elements, and reinforce these ideas using the analytical notes provided on pages 5 and 6.

### Part Two:

Play the three short melodies, provided on pages 7,8,9, on a piano and ask the student(s) to match each of the three stimuli with a different melody. Discuss why each stimulus and melody fit together. (melodic shapes, tonality, pitch range etc...)

### Part three:

Combining the three melodies and all the brainstorming ideas, begin a compositional project on one of the three different stimuli. (if working in groups, each group can be assigned a different stimulus). This work can be done using note writing computer software (for example: Sibelius) or written on manuscript paper.

### Part four:

Create a performance of the compositional project(s) and discuss different ways of developing the musical ideas further.



## The flower

*I found a flower forlorn and sere,  
No longer scented in a book,  
And by a curious idea  
My wondering spirit has been struck,*

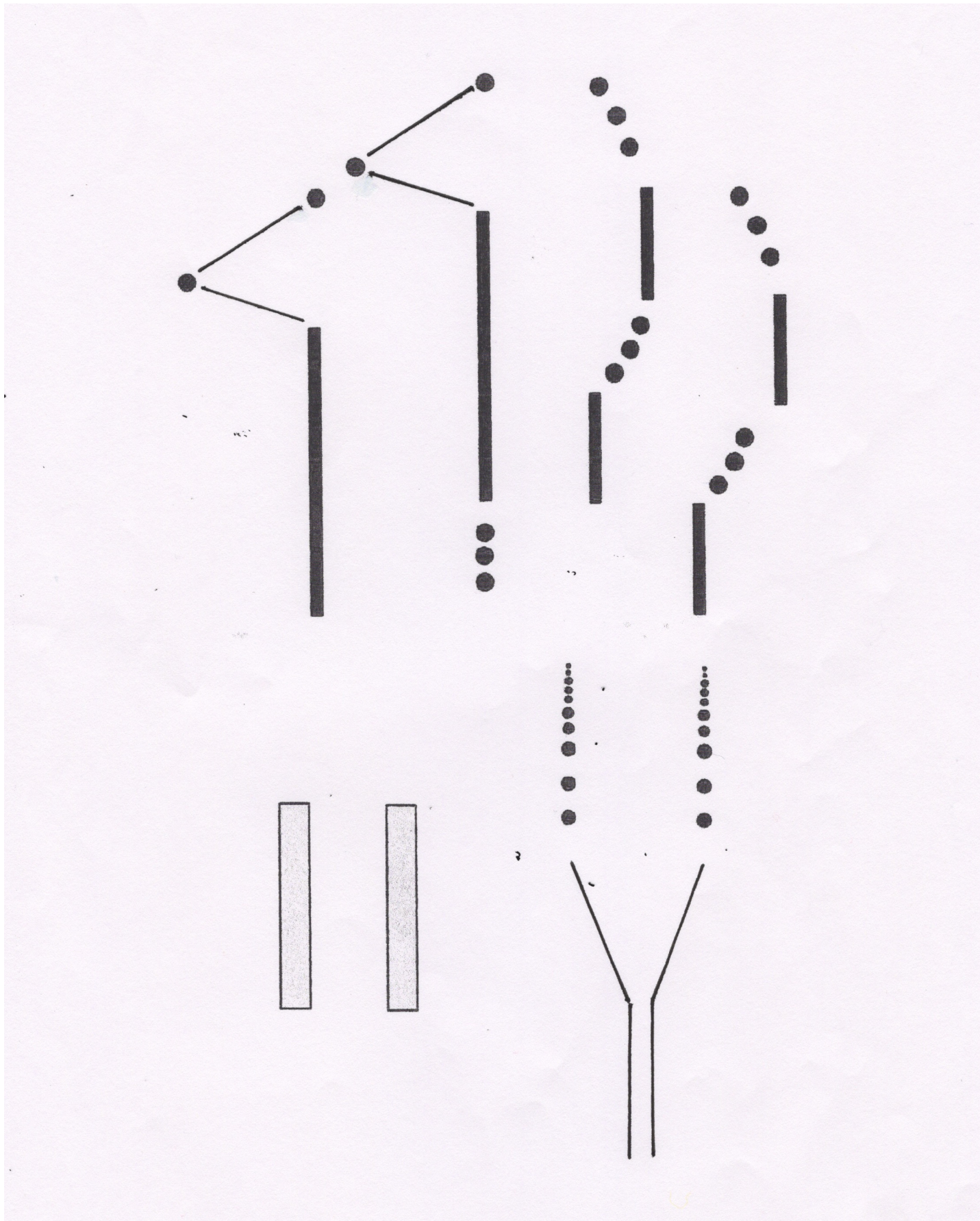
*Where, when, in what spring did it grow?  
How old was it? Who picked it, who?  
Some stranger or someone I know?  
And what was it supposed to do?*

*To mark a meeting of twin souls  
Or some dire parting of the ways?  
Or just a solitary stroll  
Through quiet fields or woodland shade?*

*And is he still alive? Is she?  
Where are they now, where is their nook?  
Or have they faded finally  
Like this lost flower in the book?*

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*Written by Alexander Pushkin (1828)*



## **Some musical ideas to represent the different stimuli:**

### **The Picture:**

- The double A engraving could suggest the note A is an important note in the melody.
- The double note A engraving could suggest the key of A Major, or the links between A Major and A Minor (tonic major, tonic minor)
- The use of light (wood stained) colours could suggest a warm, tranquil piece, and the dark shadows underneath the fire place could represent a more sinister middle section.
- The ornate chair handle and candlestick could suggest an ornamental theme, perhaps some improvisatory/cadenza passages.
- The window brings light into the room; this could represent melodic or harmonic development.
- The sharp symmetrical corners of the fireplace, the door and the marble flooring could suggest a strong and clear structure to the piece.
- The rough looking wood grain on the floor and the polished shine from the marble could suggest contrasts between dissonance and resolution.
- The worn look on the walls and the worn cushions could suggest that the piece has links with the past. (perhaps through playing techniques and instrumental writing, or stylistic features from earlier periods.)
- The dimensions of the room suggest that the piece should be seen as more vertical, rather than linear. This could lead to a piece with thicker textures, rather than contrapuntal.

### **The Poem:**

- The first verse creates a feeling of nostalgia, looking back. This could suggest a flowing melodic idea with clearly defined phrasing, a strong sense of home key, and a feeling of familiarity and roundness.
- The second verse is full of questions. This could suggest musical contrasts, under developed ideas which lead towards changes in key, rhythmic contrasts, perhaps changes in the melodic flow. (ie: less scalar and more triadic)

- The third verse provides possible answers. This could be an opportunity to blend the two sections of the piece together and provide harmonic and melodic resolutions.
- The last verse is again full of questions. Perhaps this piece could be scored using a Ritornello structure. (A, B A1) and represent the first movement of a larger piece.
- The words in the poem can be represented through music from their sounds and their natural rhythms.

For Examples:

**Curious** = dotted quaver, semiquaver, crotchet

**Struck** = accented note, or chord.

**Wondering** = decorative melodic idea (use melisma when the word is set to music by dividing up the syllables, for example: won-der-ing)

**Lost** = an interrupted cadence, or a modulation to an unrelated key.

**Parting** = this could suggest counterpoint between two melodic ideas.

**Mark, Quiet, Faded** = dynamic contrasts (mf, p, diminuendo)

### The Graphic Score:

By looking at the direction of the lines, the shapes and their proportions, it is possible to create many musical realisations:

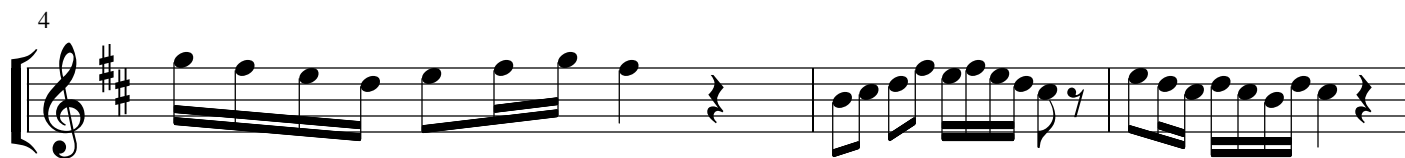
- Circles = strong, resonant notes, or clearly defined pitches (strong diatonic feel)
- The horizontal thick lines could suggest long tied notes, or monotones.
- The parallel lines could suggest contrary motion between two parts. (melodic, harmonic, or playing techniques)
- The thin vertical lines could suggest links between musical ideas, pitches, and/or rhythms.

The length of the patterns, the size of the vertical leaps could also be used to define intervallic structures, textures, and tempi for different sections in the piece.

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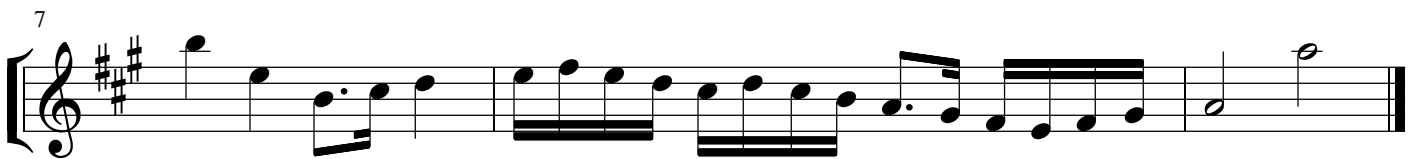
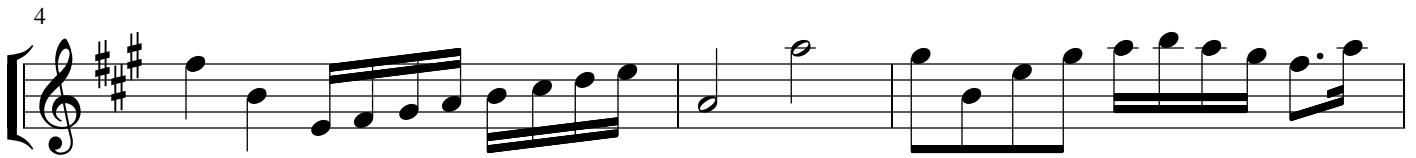
# Melody One

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# Melody Two

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# Melody Three

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